

FEBRUARY 1989

Equity Matters



University of Toronto

Status of Women Office / Office of the President

Editorial Better Late...

Our multitudes of devoted readers will be thrilled to see us back, with a pictorial supplement no less. The Women's Fair for U of T Day was one of several projects occupying the fall term and delaying this first issue for 1988-89.

Equity Matters is produced by the Status of Women Office, with help—again thanks to the Ontario Work-Study Plan—with writing and research from Leanna McLennan, a student in Literary Studies and Philosophy.

Our purpose is to inform, interest, and on occasion challenge. Let us know how we're doing.

Lois Reimer
Status of Women Officer

Gender Bias in Science

Introduction

On November 5, 1988, the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine and the Women's Clinic at the Toronto Western Hospital co-sponsored a conference entitled "Gender Science and Medicine". International speakers converged to address issues such as sexism in medical research and biases in women's health research.

This recent scholarly work is part of the current movement that questions scientific objectivity and brings to light biases in research that perpetuate restrictive gender roles.

In the past, science was recognized as an integral part of society; para-

Women's Fair at U of T Day



On Saturday, October 15, the Ivey Library at New College was transformed into a vivid showcase of University women's organizations and services.

In addition to exhibits, films, and refreshments, a "Speakers' Corner" was by turns informative and great fun, featuring U of T Writer-in-Residence Erika Ritter reading from her work, the *Globe and Mail's* Stevie Cameron discussing "The Rules of the Game of Political Reporting", and Zubeida Ramji of the Women's Health

Centre, Women's College Hospital, describing "New Initiatives in Women's Health Services". The Toronto Academy of Karate, in conjunction with the Department of Athletics and Recreation, gave an energetic Karate and Self-Defense demonstration.



Groups responsible for the success of the Women's Fair included the Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students, Centre for Urban and Community Studies (Women and Environments), Department of Athletics and Recreation - Instruction, Employment Equity Office, Graduate Students' Union, Sexual Harassment Education, Counselling and Complaint Office, Status of Women Office, University of Toronto Staff Association, Women's Centre, Women's Network, and Women's Studies Program (See insert for more pictures.)

LM

doxically, it was regarded as an entity that could operate independently. The presupposition that science is value neutral was accepted, rendering science itself free from criticism. The motives of and methods employed by individual scientists and/or research groups were criticized, rather than the structure of science itself.

Scholars now acknowledge that culture, class, race and sex are important factors in determining what is researched and can affect the interpretation of data.

Dr. Rose Sheinin has suggested that "The present gender imbalance in the corridors of power of science policy may account for the fact that many aspects of women's biology are studied only in terms of medical pathology..." and calls for the "voice of women in the assessment of which scientific problems are important and/or relevant..."

(Continued on page 2)

Status Quote

There are absolutely no courses offered at U of T that look at men's issues.

(From a letter to *the newspaper*)

Sexism in Scientific Research

In a paper presented at the November conference, Dr. Elaine Borins, Dr. Margrit Eichler and Dr. Anna Lisa Reisman focused on "Sexism in Medical Science Research". My comments on this subject are based on their paper which outlines and discusses four causes of sexism in scientific research: androcentricity, gender insensitivity, over-generalization and double standards employed in data interpretation.

Androcentricity, male centredness, is manifest in scientific research as the utilization of male forms of research. The percentage of women surveyed often becomes the unstated percentage of non-males surveyed. The presence of women must be inferred. If 80% of those surveyed were male we can assume that 20% were female. In this manner women are excluded from the statistics presented and hidden behind their male counterparts.

Gender insensitivity occurs when sex is disregarded entirely as a variable. Many researchers do not analyze sex-differentiated data according to sex. This is a costly oversight. In particular cases sex difference is an extremely important variable. A psychiatric patient, for example, might react differently to her or his doctor if she or he is a member of the same or of the opposite sex. In such cases sex difference cannot be ignored as a variable. In cases where the importance of using sex as a variable is not so apparent, gender insensitivity often leads to over-generalization.

Over-generalization comes into the picture when information based on one sex is applied to both sexes. Researchers have interviewed all-male samples and presented findings which they deem are indicative of the behaviour of both sexes. Here women are not merely invisible, they are completely non-existent. The female perspective is rendered irrelevant. The message is clear: women do not matter; men can speak for us all.

Double standards are often employed when data are interpreted. What is perceived as socially acceptable for one sex may not be acceptable for the opposite sex. Such subjective interpretation can lead to biased diagnosis and treatment recommendations.

Sexism in scientific research perpetuates biases. Dr.'s Borins, Eichler, and Reisman suggest that we take action by withholding funding from and refusing to publish gender-biased studies.

Science: Equal Opportunity Employment?

Science is now a viable career choice for women. However, despite the increased accessibility of education and employment to women entering scientific professions, women are presented with many obstacles that men do not encounter.

Historically, the achievements of women in science went unrecorded. When their achievements were acknowledged the contributions of women were devalued. The absence of role models deterred women from choosing scientific careers.

Today, gender symbolism, the division of characteristics into feminine and masculine categories, continues to create an image of which behaviour is appropriate for women and which is appropriate for men. The division of labour by gender further emphasizes these supposed 'differences', and women and men are channelled into traditional careers.

Gender symbolism works against women, and in favour of men, who are entering scientific professions. Biological determinists regard men as objective, rational beings who are driven by reason; women are seen as subjective, irrational beings who are driven by their emotions and intuition. Rational, reasonable women are discriminated against due to the false belief that they are biologically unsuited for scientific work.

Consequently, women do not have the same access to academic institutions or employment as men do. It is frequently anticipated by admissions officers and potential employers that women will abandon their profession in favour of domestic 'duties', such as child rearing. For this reason, female scientists are regarded as 'greater risks'. It is assumed that if male scientists have children their spouse will remain at home and care for them. Women, on the other hand, are expected to choose between their career and their family.

Despite the social and structural obstacles that they face, an increasing number of women are choosing to enter science. Women are continually overcoming these obstacles; however, this is not enough. The obstacles must be eliminated.

Recent Developments

The new science movement and the feminist inquiry of science, outlined in Sandra Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism*, are working towards eliminating these obstacles and developing a successor science.

The belief that progress is "desirable and possible" is shared by adherents

to both of these movements. They believe that authoritarian attitudes must be challenged, and emphasize personal experience as a valid source of knowledge. They posit educational reform to provide men with a "less distorted understanding of women" and to provide women with the means to end the oppression of women.

The successor science is grounded in the belief that the theoretical, moral and political aspects of science are inseparable from its practical aspects.

Practical and feasible solutions to the problem of gender bias in the sciences are outlined in *Attracting and Retaining Women Students for Science and Engineering*, a report in June 1988 by the Council of Ontario Universities' Committee on the Status of Women.

The Committee states that "gender imbalances in the major areas of study are important to the universities of Ontario, and indeed to the society as a whole, because they indicate that we may not be making the best use of the talents of the current and coming generations of our young people".

The issues addressed in the report include: recruitment and outreach programs, promotional materials, access, climate, retention (which includes developing support systems and ancillary services), counselling, career development, role models, and visibility in the academic community. The report also covers curriculum, data collection and research, and faculty and staff development.

This report is significant because it focuses on solutions to the problem of gender bias that utilize existing resources. For example, at the U of T the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering hosted "Engineering '88: Future Horizons", a mini-conference designed to encourage young women to consider the opportunities of an engineering education.

In addition to measures that are "relatively easy and inexpensive to coordinate and implement", the Committee also outlines "more ambitious undertakings, for which substantial commitments of monetary and personnel resources might be required".

The COU report, various conferences, and other initiatives are evidence of the awareness and concern needed to develop a non-sexist, non-biased science.

Dr. Anne Fausto-Sterling, speaking at "Gender Science and Medicine" in November, described that conference as "both an agent of change and a symbol of change". Current critiques of science are also agents and symbols of change. Social views and structures, including the scientific enterprise, are being critiqued by feminist and other scholars. The historical framework for change exists. It is now up to us to take action.

Women's Fair



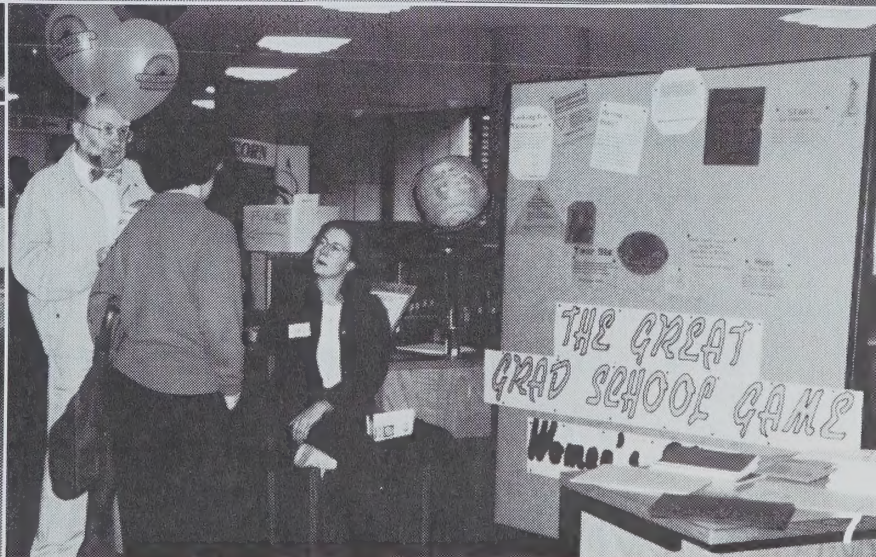
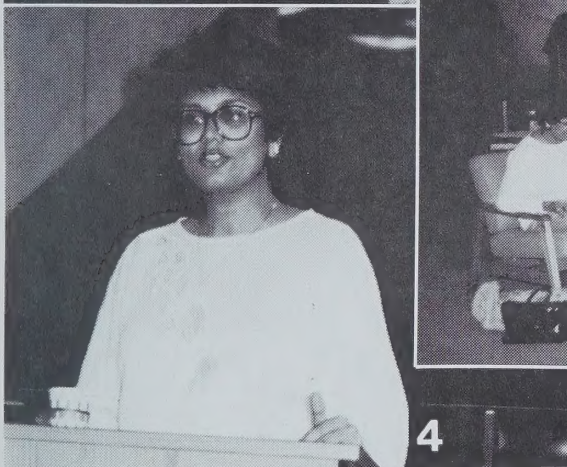
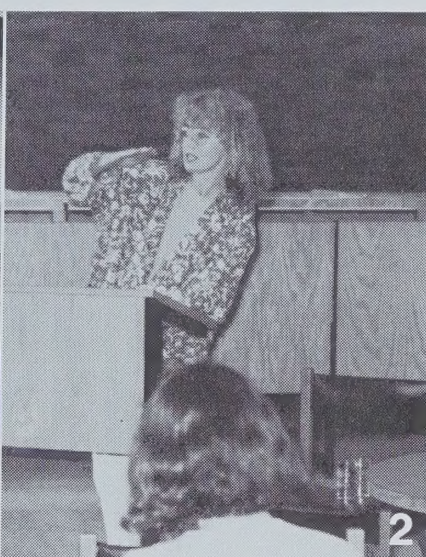
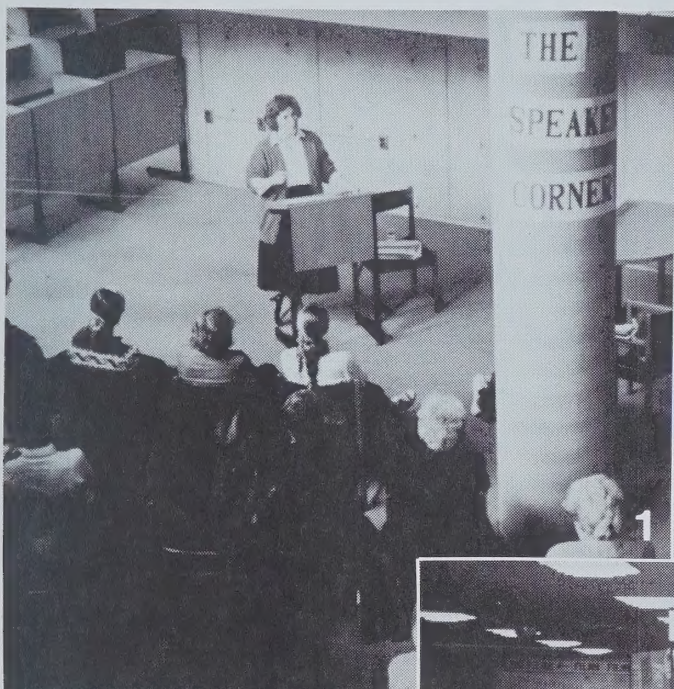
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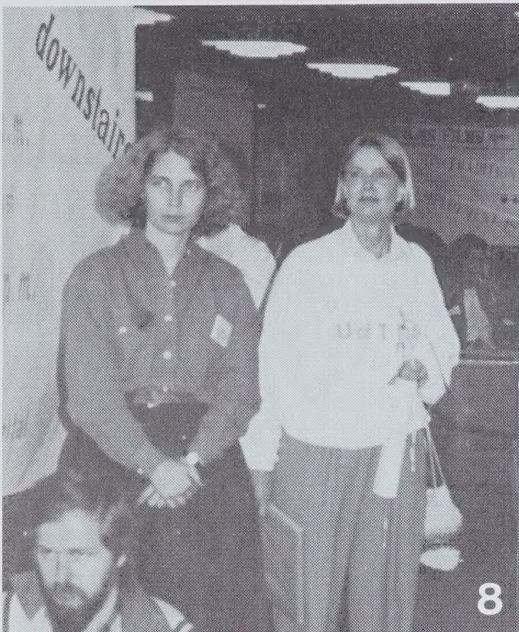
- 1 Speakers' Corner
- 2 with Erika Ritter
- 3 Stevie Cameron
- 4 Zubeida Ramji
- 5 Exhibits - Women's Studies Program
- 6 Sexual Harassment Office
- 7 Graduate Students' Union

The other side

- 9 University of Toronto Staff Association
- 10 Department of Athletics and Recreation
- 11 Women's Centre
- 12 Status of Women Office
- 8, 13 Some VIP's (Very Impressed and Proud)

(Photography: Bill Symmons)





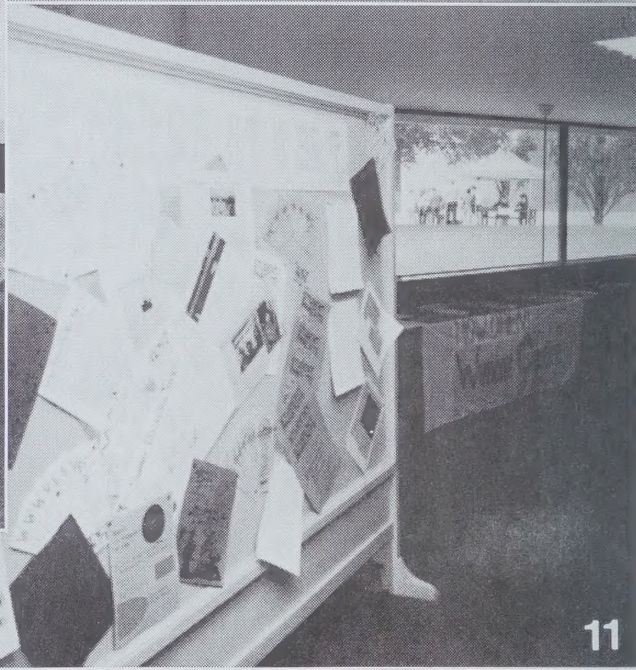
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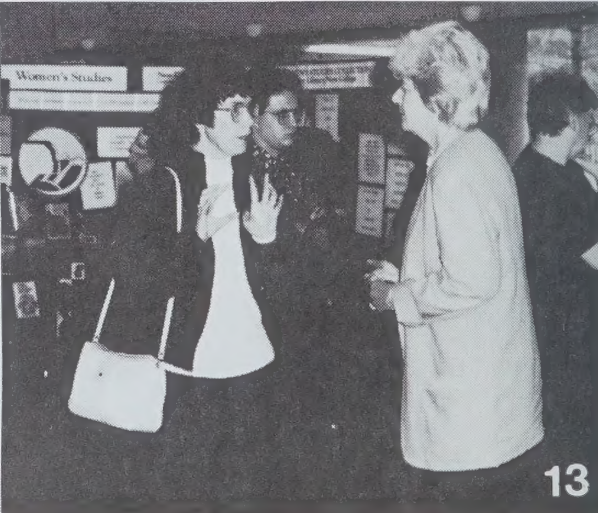
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FOURTH ANNUAL

Women's Centenary Lecture

The Women's Centenary Lecture Committee
for the University of Toronto
takes great pleasure in announcing a lecture by

Dr. Nafis Sadik

Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities

**WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE:
POPULATION, ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT**



Monday, February 27, 1989 at 4:30 pm

George Ignatieff Theatre, 15 Devonshire Place

Admission FREE No Tickets Required

Information 978 4410



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Due Recognition



The Women's
Centre at the
University of

Toronto was recognized by SAC as an 'official' campus group in October. Surprisingly (or not surprisingly), recognition of the Women's Centre has been a controversial issue - largely due to misunderstandings of what the Centre really is and does.

To clear up a few misunderstandings:

The Women's Centre does not discriminate against men. Men can, and do, volunteer at the Centre and take part in its functions. They cannot, however, become members of the collective which directs its activities. Why no men at the centre of the Centre?

As Paula Rochman and David Rayside explain in a paper entitled "Why a Women's Only Collective?"

"Far from seeking to completely segregate women and men, the proposal that the Women's Centre be directed by women recognizes that the move towards equality requires women to increase their strength and their collective unity, and to do that themselves."

The Women's Centre is not an abortion counselling service. The Centre has a pro-choice policy, supporting every woman's right to the control of her own body. The Centre also makes campus life easier for students with children, providing a contact service with schools or day care centres in case of an emergency, and co-ordinating a student-parents babysitting exchange.

The Centre's main objective is to end oppression of a sexist, racist, and homophobic nature.

Activities (often jointly with other groups) are wide-ranging: discussions (women and sports, pay equity, racism and sexism in education); films (Canadian women writers, South African women, health and poverty); conferences (women of colour); responses to campus proposals (sexual harassment, day care); submissions (Ontario Task Force on Midwifery, proposed provincial pay equity legislation); lobbying (human rights code, summer job programs).

Ongoing support services include:

- a resource and referral centre
- a lesbian discussion group
- a Black women's group

- a general discussion group
- a drop-in centre.

The Co-ordinator of the Women's Centre is Baljit Banga. The Centre is located at 49 St. George Street, telephone 978-8201. LM

Ryerson Hiring Targets for Women Faculty

A plan that includes fifty-seven tenure stream positions for women, of an anticipated seventy-two appointments over the next decade, has been unanimously approved by the Board of Governors of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute.

The aim of the employment equity staffing plan, as reported in the *Ryerson Forum* on January 6, is "to approximate, in each discipline, the percentage of females in the external pool of appropriately qualified potential applicants". Positions designated female will be held open - "taking into consideration the relative urgency of filling the position" - until qualified women can be recruited.

In response to concerns expressed, it was pointed out that purely voluntary approaches have not worked. The *Ryerson Forum* article quotes President Terry Grier as "very optimistic that the quality of Ryerson faculty will be enhanced by this policy. I want to state that very emphatically."

Safe & Sound

Safe & Sound is a University of Toronto publication which provides information on general safety, sexual assault, sexual harassment, health services, theft, insurance, student services, sexually transmitted diseases and substance abuse.

Although primarily directed towards students (hence, subtitled "*Lifestyle Information for U of T Students*"), the booklet offers information of interest to all members of the University community. As well, it lists a variety of relevant services and organizations.

Safe & Sound was widely distributed on all three of the U of T campuses during registration. It is available at the SAC Office, 12 Hart House Circle, 978-4911. LM

Help Wanted

The U of T is looking for \$100 million. Everyone is welcome to join in the search.

Those of us who work and study here know personally how pressing the University's needs are and how vital participation in the Breakthrough campaign is to meeting those needs.

Gifts may be earmarked for one or more of a wide variety of projects under the headings of learning and scholarship, research and discovery, and campus development. (A couple that just happen to come to mind at the moment are the New College Women's Program and the Opportunity Fund for Hiring Women Faculty, but there are many others equally worthy!) Or, donors may designate another purpose of their own choosing.



The important thing is to take part: a strong faculty, staff, and student response is key to our success in the wider community.

Chancellor's Award

Sarah Cherian, Graduate Admissions and Programs Officer, Department of Electrical Engineering, has received the 1988 Chancellor's Award from the University of Toronto Alumni Association.

This award, granted annually since 1984, celebrates the "outstanding contribution" of a member of the administrative staff to the University community. One of her nominators wrote: "Mrs. Cherian has been a dedicated and loyal employee of the University for nearly twenty years...Sarah has earned the confidence, respect and affection of all professors, administrators, colleagues here and in the School of Graduate Studies, and particularly many generations of graduate students."

Mrs. Cherian's award was presented at the November 25th Convocation. We join many in congratulating her. LM

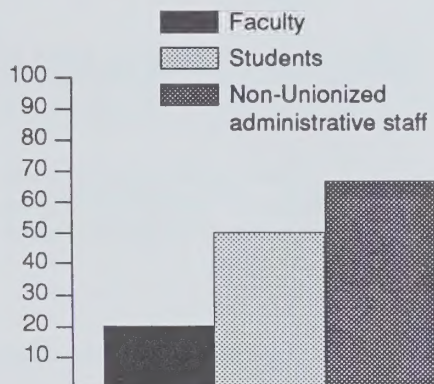


Women In Toronto

Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, will be the 1989 Women's Centenary Lecturer. The first woman in the UN's history to head one of its major voluntary-funded programs, Dr. Sadik has chosen a topic of wide interest: "Women as Agents of Change: Population, Environment and Development".

Dr. Sadik is speaking on Monday, February 27 at 4:30 p.m. in the George Ignatieff Theatre, Trinity College, 15 Devonshire Place. Tickets are not required.

Speaking Graphically



Women at the University of Toronto
1986-1987 (Full-Time)

Status of Women Office
Office of the President
Simcoe Hall, Room 206
27 King's College Circle
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1A1

Women's Network Join Us for Lunch (BYOBB*)

February 14 - Stevie Cameron
(*Globe and Mail*);
March 14 - Erika Ritter
(Author and Writer-in-Residence);
April 11 - Rivi Frankle
(Executive Director, Alumni Affairs);
May 9 - Rose Sheinin
(Vice-Dean,
School of Graduate Studies);
June 13 - Peter O'Brien
(Editor, *Bulletin*).

Tuesdays, 12:00 noon, Croft Chapter House (University College)
Everyone is welcome.

*Bring your own brown bag. (Coffee is served)

Interested in Volunteering?

Sistering, a community mental health agency, needs volunteers for its drop-in centre for low-income women. This opportunity may be of particular interest to women considering careers in law, medicine, education, or social work. Please contact the program co-ordinator, Cindy Cowan, at 366-0493 for further information. LM

Persons Awards

On October 18, 1929, Canadian women became "persons". To mark the 50th anniversary of this constitutional achievement, the Persons Awards were established a decade ago, and to date fifty-four women across Canada have been recognized for their outstanding contributions toward improving the status of women.

Candidates may be nominated by individuals or groups. Further information is available on campus from the Status of Women Office, or from Status of Women Canada, 151 Sparks Street, Ottawa, K1A 1C3. The deadline for 1989 nominations is April 15.

Equity Matters

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978-2196/2757

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